



## SOCIAL ENGINEERING: COMMON SCAMS

Crimes of deception are most often committed with the assistance of an innocent victim. Those crimes, often called "social engineering" usually occur when the perpetrator asks the victim to assist in the completion of a task that results in the criminal obtaining a "free" call – at the victim's expense. Two of the most common social engineering schemes that involve businesses are listed below.

### **SCAM: CALLER REQUESTS A TRANSFER TO A "TEST NUMBER" OR TO A LONG DISTANCE OPERATOR.**

**BACKGROUND:** The caller identifies himself as a technician for a local or long distance telephone company, checking on a trouble. He or she may advise that the line(s) need to be checked for volume or static. He/she may ask to be transferred to a "test number" such as 90, 9011, 900, 910, 9180, etc., and will often provide helpful instructions on how to transfer the call, based on the transfer capability of the phone equipment. The transfer will usually result in the victim connecting the criminal to an international operator or starting the placement of a call to an international destination.

**DEFENSE:** Remember that the telephone companies and equipment providers do not normally require the assistance of an internal telephone user in performing line tests. Ask the technician for the repair ticket number for the trouble and a callback number. A legitimate technician can provide a trouble ticket number that can be verified by calling the repair service number listed in your phone book. Suggest that the caller perform more comprehensive tests by making a visit to the premise and presenting a valid picture ID badge to prove he/she really is an employee of the Telephone Company he/she allegedly represents.

### **SCAM: ACCEPT COLLECT CALLS/TRANSFER TO OUTSIDE LINES.**

**BACKGROUND:** This scam is very commonly used by prisoners, and possibly others as well. Prisoners have access to telephones, but usually can only make collect calls from them. Systems in use at prisons are usually automated, without a live operator. Many of the systems used for inmate calls are multilingual, usually using the English and Spanish languages. The inmate chooses the language for the announcement at the time the call is set up. If the recipient does not understand the instructions on the origin of the call, or how the call can be accepted or refused, the inmate can record the following statement: "press one for help" instead of his name (when prompted by the automated operator). The recipient of the call only understands the instructions given by the inmate (since it is in English) and thereby cooperates and accepts the call (instructions will normally tell the recipient to press 1 or say yes to accept the call). The inmate then typically has the call connected to the main number of a business. After the call is connected, the inmate will convince the employee (typically a receptionist or switchboard operator) to connect him/her to an outside line. The inmate will frequently ask to be transferred to another person in the business to reduce suspicion.

**DEFENSE:** Do not accept collect calls, especially from prisoners. If you do not wish to allow any collect calls, your local telephone company can usually provide screening to prevent collect or third number billed calls. Even with this screening in place, you should monitor billings, as some calls can get through, and the automated calls from prisons are not treated as collect calls during setup. Advise telephone users to hang up on calls that begin with a foreign language automated announcement. Never connect incoming calls with an outgoing line.



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